

How to Share Your Testimony - Part 4 - Acts 22:14-16 – October 4th, 2009

- By way of introduction, I think it's incumbent upon me to sort of set the scene so as to have a better understanding of what's happening.

- Upon the Apostle's arrival in Jerusalem, a rumor was started, and thus a riot was started, all because they believed a false accusation.
- Because they wanted to kill Paul, he was taken into protective custody by the Roman guard and about to enter the Antonia Fortress.
- Before being put in this prison, Paul is given permission to speak to the mob. Instead of preaching the gospel, he shares his testimony.

- This is part four of a series titled; "How to Share Your Testimony." What Paul does and says in sharing his testimony is most brilliant.
- In the text we have before us, the Apostle can rise from the pages of scripture and be an example to us, in how we share our faith.
- Over the last three weeks we have seen seven of these "hows" in verses 1-13, and will begin with the eighth one in verses 14-16.

1. Be prepared (Verse 1)

- The way Paul begins seems to indicate that he had not only anticipated this opportunity, but had actually been well prepared for it.

2. Speak their language (Verse 2)

- Paul could have spoken Greek but chooses to speak in the Hebrew tongue, knowing they would understand the language of their heart.

3. Find common ground (Verse 3a)

- Paul says he's a Jew born in Tarsus but brought up in Jerusalem so he would have common ground with the Greek and Hellenist Jews.

4. Earn their respect (Verses 3b-5)

- Paul allies himself to both Jewish factions when he tells them he was trained by Gamaliel the most respected Jewish Rabbi of their day.

5. Turn on the light (Verses 6-9)

- Instead of the curse of the law and what it couldn't do for them, he tells them about the light of the world and what He could do for them.

6. Keep it simple (Verses 10-11)

- When he asks Jesus what he's to do, he's just told to "simply" go to Damascus, then, he's led, like a child, by the hand and by faith.

7. Include the miraculous (Verses 12-13)

- After being blinded by the light, Paul tells how he received his sight when God, through Ananias, miraculously removed his blindness.

8. Highlight God's forgiveness (Verses 14-16)

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

- v14 Paul then says the God of their fathers has chosen him to know God's will which is to see the Righteous One and hear His words.
- v15 He tells them that he is to be a witness to all men, referring to both the Jews and the Gentiles, of what he had seen and heard.
- v16 Paul says how Ananias then asks what he is waiting for and that he should get up, be baptized and receive forgiveness for his sin.

- It's important to know that the forgiveness for and washing away of sin does not come from water baptism, but calling on Jesus' name.

"When baptism is preceded by repentance, and is attended by a believing calling on the name of the Lord, it becomes a beautiful emblem of that washing away of sins, which is graciously given to all believers. Paul told his own conversion, for he well knew that God often blesses such personal confessions."
Charles Spurgeon

- Paul's emphasis here is not about water baptism as much as it's about calling upon Jesus' name to be forgiven and cleansed from sin.
- If the Apostle Paul had chosen to not communicate and highlight this, he would have in effect, gutted out the good news of the gospel.
- So too is this true for us. If the good news of God's forgiveness is gutted out of our lives, then sin will have dominion over our lives.

- If I've been the recipient of God's forgiveness and cleansing for my sin; then sin no longer has permission to control and dominate me.
- This is the good news and that's why Paul includes it and even highlights it when he tells them that he was forgiven for all his past sins.
- Paul not only tells them "that" he's forgiven and cleansed for all his sins, he also tells them "how" to be forgiven and cleansed from sin.

- The how is simply this; "It's in the calling upon, and confessing to the Lord, that the forgiveness for and cleansing come from the Lord."
- In other words, when sin remains un-confessed, then sin remains un-forgiven, and un-cleansed, and I will remain under sin's dominion.
- It's for this reason I have sensed from the Holy Spirit; that the Lord is directing my heart to spend the remainder of our time on just this.

- What we're about to discover may be one of the most, if not "the" most, powerful life freeing, and life giving truths in the entire Bible.
- Here it is; "God has made us and wired us with the need to confess our sin in order for there to be a releasing and freeing from our sin."
- We don't need to confess to God so He knows we need to confess to God that we know. When we do, we free ourselves from sin's grip.

"Confession is all important. We must confess our sins, if the faithful Lord is to forgive them. Confession is taking God's side against ourselves. It is the act of judging evil in the light of the Throne. It is like the unpacking of a box, in which one begins with the lighter things at the top, and works steadily down to the heavy articles underneath."
F.B. Meyer